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THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM OF THE UNITED STATES TRAINING CORPS FOR WOMEN.

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The need of practical measures for the advancement of physical development among the young people of the United States was clearly indicated by the startling proportion of preventable or correctible incapacitating physical defects found among the men examined for admission into our military establishment during the active period of the war. The training and régime of the Army and Navy training camps promptly effected among the recruits generally a remarkable improvement in health and vigor.

It may be assumed that the proportion of preventable or correctible physical defects among the American women at least equals that found among our men. With the idea that a course of physical training somewhat similar to that given in the military camps would benefit the average woman, Miss Susanna Cocroft, who had had extensive experience in the physical training of women, came to Washington in 1918 and offered her services for the establishment of training courses for women working in the Government departments. Her offer was accepted and over 3,500 women working in the Government offices in Washington availed themselves of the opportunity to learn under expert guidance, outdoors in the early morning and late afternoon hours, breathing and setting-up exercises and the quick reflex mental alertness necessary to the accomplishment of military maneuvers. The benefit of this course to the women who took it was obvious. The results indicated the advisability of efforts to apply, on a Nation-wide scale and after the active period of the war had ended, the principles established. The plan formulated by Miss Cocroft is the establishment under the auspices of the National Government of a large number of training camps for women in different parts of the United States, the camps to be permanent or temporary according to the local controllable conditions and indications.

A practical test of the plan was made by the establishment and operation of a camp on the shore of Lake Geneva, Wis., in August, 1919. The camp was designated "Camp Geneva." One hundred and forty-seven women took the training course in this camp. The course was of either two weeks' or one month's duration. The

women came from 22 different States. Some were from cities and some were from strictly rural sections. Their age range was from 20 to 65 years; about half were married. Some were wealthy and some were wage earners in stores or offices. Thus they constituted a fairly typical representation of American women.

The camp was excellently located on ground sloping gently to the lake, and the area was more than ample. Tents were provided for sleeping quarters and were so operated as to furnish practically outdoor conditions for sleeping. The sanitary installations were exceptionally good for a temporary camp, and careful attention was given to the maintenance of good sanitary conditions. The régime of the camp was strictly military in character; the course consisted of training in breathing, correct posture and setting-up exercises, drilling, swimming, and lectures on various practical subjects. The women before admission to the training course and periodically during the course were given physical examinations by a woman physician. The instructions in drilling were given by two lieutenants and two sergeants detailed to the camp from the United States Army.

As the main purpose of the training course was to stimulate a lasting interest and give detailed instructions in health measures, a considerable proportion of the lecture course was devoted to this topic. A series of six lectures on physiology, hygiene, and sanitation was given by two officers detailed from the United States Public Health Service. These officers, Asst. Surg. R. C. Williams and the writer, were requested by the camp management to assist in the formulation of a concrete plan for the alignment of the United States Training Corps for Women with the forces working constructively for the advancement of the national health interests. A committee of seven, fairly representative of all the women in the camp, was selected from among the members of the corps to take part in the deliberations. The result of the deliberations was in the form of a pledge as follows:

HEALTH PLEDGE OF THE UNITED STATES TRAINING CORPS FOR WOMEN.

As a member of the United States Training Corps for Women, I hereby pledge myself in the interest of the health of the people of the United States to the following:

1. To endeavor to keep myself in good physical trim—
 - (a) By proper breathing exercises;
 - (b) By setting-up exercises;
 - (c) By the use, so far as may be practicable, of a wholesome well-balanced diet;
 - (d) By cleanliness and care of the mouth and teeth;
 - (e) By regular bathing—daily when practicable.
2. To dispose of the secretions and excretions from my body in a sanitary manner—
 - (a) By smothering my coughs and sneezes so that the droplets will not be deposited directly on the bodies of other persons;
 - (b) By practicing consistently the most cleanly methods practicable to prevent sputum and the excretions from the intestines and kidneys from being scattered about to be a menace to the health and comfort of others;
 - (c) By having my hands clean when handling foods for myself and others.

3. To protect myself from dangerous dirt (and tactfully to encourage others so to protect themselves)—

- (a) By avoiding the use of common saliva-contaminated drinking or eating vessels or utensils;
- (b) By avoiding the use of common soiled towels;
- (c) By avoiding so far as may be practicable the use of unclean or unwholesome foods and beverages.

4. To do all practicable to have established and maintained at my own home good sanitary conditions with particular respect to—

- (a) Ventilation of the dwelling house;
- (b) Disposal of human excreta, garbage, stable manure, and other refuse matter;
- (c) The safeguarding or purification of the water supply used for drinking or culinary purposes;
- (d) The safeguarding or purification (pasteurization) of the household milk supply;
- (e) The elimination of flies and other contaminating agents from foods used for human consumption.

5. To join in or to inaugurate community efforts to advance community hygiene with particular respect to—

- (a) The obtainment of clean and wholesome public water supplies;
- (b) The obtainment of clean and wholesome public supplies of milk, ice cream, meats, vegetables, bread, and other foods;
- (c) The establishment and maintenance of adequate public service for the collection and disposal of garbage, stable manure, and privy contents, in such places as present conditions suitable for the practicable and economic operation of such public service;
- (d) The extension of or the installation of sanitary sewerage systems or sanitary privy systems;
- (e) The carrying out of measures to prevent mosquitoes.

6. To observe, and to encourage the observance of, hygienic measures for the promotion of infant welfare, and in the event of motherhood to nurse my child at my breast if possible.

7. To promote the health of young people by doing everything in my power to encourage outdoor setting-up exercises—daily when the weather permits—for all children in our schools.

8. To do all practicable to help in the development and maintenance of reasonably adequate local (town, city, or county), State, and national governmental health organizations.

Each member of the corps committee expressed the opinion that the provisions of this pledge are practical and that observance of them can reasonably be expected from the average American woman who has had a training course similar to that given at Camp Geneva. The pledge was submitted to all the members of the corps then in the camp, and of 126 women present, 125 signed the pledge with enthusiasm and apparently with the definite intention of observing the principles involved. If the members of the corps observe the provisions of their pledge to the degree suggested by the intelligent and enthusiastic interest of those at Camp Geneva, and if the plan contemplated for the extension of the training course to thousands of women in different sections of the country should be carried out, the United States Training Corps for Women will become a public health agency of tremendous practical value to our Nation.